



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Official Planning Documents Available for Public Review

Comment Period Ends September 2

For more than two years, the public has provided critical input on key elements of the *Shared Path 2030* regional transportation planning process. The final step is public review of three official planning documents, which CATS made available to the public on August 1:

Draft 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The RTP provides public policy direction and guidance for the continued development of a safe, efficient surface transportation system in northeast Illinois. The RTP also meets federal transportation planning requirements and identifies future funding priorities. See feature article (begins, right) for a brief summary.

Proposed FY2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a six-year agenda of specific surface transportation projects throughout northeast Illinois. See page 3 for more information.

Air Quality Conformity Analysis

CATS analyzes the RTP and TIP together to ensure that they are consistent with state and federal clean air requirements. The document presents the results of that effort. See page 3 for more information.

HOW TO REVIEW THESE DOCUMENTS

- Visit the CATS website (www.catsmpo.com) to review the documents on-line
- Call 312/793-5041 to request a copy of the documents.

WHEN AND HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

As mentioned in the July issue of this newsletter, **the official public comment period runs from August 1, 2003 to September 2, 2003.** You can submit comments in any of the following ways:

- by mail at: CATS, Communications Division
300 W. Adams St.,
Chicago, IL 60606
- by fax at: CATS, Communications Division
312/793-3481
- by e-mail at:
PublicComments@catsmpo.com
- by visiting the CATS web site at:
www.catsmpo.com
- by calling the CATS SP2030 hotline at 312/793-5041.

NOTE: *Comments submitted in April/May 2003 on the preliminary RTP recommendations are considered part of the official record and will continue to be used as CATS proceeds through its decision-making process.*



FEATURE ARTICLE

Summary of Draft 2030 Regional Transportation Plan

The Chicago region continues to grow and change. By 2030, the region is expected to have 1.8 million more people and 1.2 million more jobs. To prepare for this future, the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) has prepared the *2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Northeastern Illinois*. The RTP identifies emerging transportation challenges, includes strategic and capital recommendations intended to both accommodate and manage growth, and provides a guide for long-term transportation investment. Following review of public comments on the Draft 2030 RTP, the CATS Policy Committee will adopt the final plan in October.

The Draft 2030 RTP is a complex and detailed document. This article briefly summarizes overall plan content. To review the entire plan, see the article at left on how to obtain a copy.

Plan Contents

The first section outlines the two-year *Shared Path 2030* planning process. Participants included elected officials, regional and local planning agencies, civic and advocacy groups, transportation implementers and providers, and concerned citizens. *Shared Path 2030* also benefited from the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission's (NIPC) *Common Ground* planning process, the *Connecting Communities* outreach by the Center for Neighborhood Technology, the *Chicago Metropolis 2020* planning

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FEATURE ARTICLE

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effort, Pace's *Vision 2020* Plan, the freight rail industry's *CREATE* plan, and several county transportation plans.

The second section delineates the plan's intent, scope and constraints, discusses regional transportation challenges and concerns, and presents plan goals and objectives. Constraints on the plan are two-fold: the plan recommendations must be consistent with projected revenue sources; and must conform to state air quality goals. The three RTP goals are: (1) Maintain the integrity of the existing transportation system, (2) Improve transportation system performance, and (3) Employ transportation to sustain the region's vision and values.

The third section is the analytical detail of the plan. It defines the transportation system, presents socioeconomic and land use forecasts, identifies four different future transportation alternatives and the various measures used to evaluate these alternatives, and presents detailed analytical data.

The final section contains the plan recommendations themselves, which are discussed next.

Plan Recommendations

The 2030 RTP includes strategic and capital recommendations intended to both accommodate and manage growth. Between 2004 and 2030, *Shared Path 2030* estimates that **\$61 billion** will be available to maintain and

improve the region's transportation system. Of that, an estimated \$47 billion is needed to maintain the existing transportation system. The RTP recommends that \$5 billion be allocated for improving the region's "shared-use" system (comprised of arterial, bus, truck, bicycle and pedestrian facilities), and that \$9 billion

be allocated to expand the highway and passenger rail network. However, nearly \$20 billion in major capital needs were identified during *Shared Path 2030*. The 2030 RTP, therefore, provides guidance for identifying, refining and advancing those proposals with the greatest merit.

The RTP presents its recommendations in three parts: (1) Regional Transportation Strategies, (2) Strategic Regional Systems, and (3) Major Capital Projects. Underscoring these recommendations, and woven throughout the RTP, are the key concepts of "context-sensitive solutions", "shared-use" facilities, and "transit-oriented development." Thumbnail descriptions of those concepts can be found in the orange insets throughout this newsletter.

Regional Transportation Strategies

These strategies provide general policy guidance in three areas. **Community strategies** recommend such approaches as offering efficient transportation choices to communities, making transportation improvements that support existing and planned land uses, and encouraging compact land development. **Environmental strategies** focus on ways in which transportation facilities can enhance environmental quality by, for example, promoting connections to greenways, protecting wetlands and groundwater recharge, and making transportation improvements in accordance with NIPC's model environmental ordinances.

Management and operation strategies emphasize improving system performance and safety, and accommodating movement of commercial goods. The RTP gives guidance on maintaining/reconstructing highway auxiliary lanes and interchanges; making rail yard, track and signal, and grade separation improvements; maximizing use of intelligent transportation systems (ITS); and improving transit service coordination and congestion management. Safety recommendations focus not only on vehicle safety, but on promoting the safety of persons not in vehicles who are using or adjacent to transportation facilities, such as cyclists, pedestrians, children, seniors and those with disabilities.

Strategic Regional Systems

The 2030 RTP identifies four regional systems: a strategic regional arterial system, a strategic regional transit system, a strategic bicycle and pedestrian system, and a strategic regional freight system. Rather than allocate funds for each system, the RTP emphasizes a "shared-use" linkage of these systems, and recommends a single amount of forecast revenue (\$5 billion) for the systems as a group. CATS believes the region is better served by more fully integrating arterial, transit, bicycle, pedestrian and commercial goods movement. Newsletter insert Page A summarizes some of the specific recommendations related to Strategic Regional Systems.

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Context-Sensitive Solutions . . .

focus on the effects transportation facilities have on the environment and communities. The RTP recommends several principles of context-sensitive planning and design, including mitigating disruption to community quality and stressing that transportation's harmony with the values of the area is as important as improved mobility and accessibility. The RTP recommends using context-sensitive solutions in all phases of project assessment, planning and design.

Major Capital Projects

(continued from page 2)

Major capital projects are listed on newsletter insert Page B. Because these projects represent approximately \$20 billion worth of investment, and only \$9 billion is allocated for major capital recommendations, the RTP has organized its recommendations into categories indicating the “readiness” of the individual recommendations:

- “System Recommendations” are proposals that can be implemented in a relatively shorter time frame.
- “Project Recommendations” are proposals for which consensus exists on a preferred alternative, but for which project studies, design, acquisition and construction are expected to require nearly the full 25-year planning horizon to complete.
- “Corridor Recommendations” are individual or sets of projects for which there is not yet a preferred alternative or multi-modal coordination scheme, and in which proposals overlap and require further study.

The RTP recommends allocating the \$9 billion of project capital funds among these three categories of projects as shown on the table below. Insert Page B identifies which capital projects are included in which categories.

Category of Capital Projects	Allocation (in billions of dollars)
System Recommendations (quicker turnaround)	\$1.9B (45% of \$4.2B in projects)
Project Recommendations (more ready)	\$3.4B (100% of \$3.4B in projects)
Corridor Recommendations (need study)	\$3.7B (33% of \$12.2B in projects)
TOTAL	\$9B

In addition to these major capital projects, the RTP also includes major capital projects for which there is already a funding commitment in place. These are projects currently in the state’s five-year construction program or which have Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Start full funding agreements. The funding of the following projects (\$1.3 billion) does not come out of the \$9 billion available for future major capital projects:

- CTA (Chicago Transit Authority) Brown Line Rehabilitation
- CTA Blue Line Douglas Branch Rehabilitation (includes Phase I of Circle Line proposal)
- Metra North Central Service Upgrade (Phase I)
- Metra Union Pacific West Elburn Extension
- Metra Southwest Service Manhattan Extension (Phase I)
- O’Hare Collector/Distributor Road
- Dan Ryan Expressway Reconstruction

FY2004-2009

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is northeast Illinois’ agenda of surface transportation projects. The TIP lists federally funded projects and regionally significant, non-federally funded projects planned for implementation in the upcoming six-year period. The TIP is updated at each meeting of the CATS Work Program Committee. It is a tool for multi-jurisdictional communication and public information, and helps both the transportation community and the general public track the use of local, state and federal transportation funds.

The TIP for Fiscal Year (FY) 2004-2009 was made available to the public on August 1, along with the proposed FY2004 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), the Draft 2030 RTP and the Air Quality Conformity Analysis (see below). The TIP document includes:

- A regional overview and a discussion of how the TIP supports the goals of the RTP.
- A description of the agencies and steps in the TIP development process, including the various funding sources for transportation projects.
- Northeast Illinois’ fiscal plan for its transportation program.
- An overview of the region’s response to federal requirements.
- A list of projects that make up the FY2004-2009 program.

AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS

Ground level ozone poses a significant health risk to our region. This pollutant is formed primarily by the reaction in sunlight of volatile organic compounds (VOC) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx). The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has established a “mobile-source budget” for these pollutants. It must be demonstrated that motor vehicle emissions do not exceed 127.42 tons per day of VOC and 280.40 tons per day of NOx in the years 2007 and beyond. The Air Quality document shows that these standards will be met by the RTP and TIP proposals.

Shared Use Facilities . . .

encourage and accommodate safe and efficient use by pedestrians, bicycles, buses, autos and trucks. The RTP emphasizes that arterial improvements in particular give priority to shared-use principles. These principles highlight pedestrian and bicyclist safety, small-scale design considerations, providing convenient pedestrian access to buses and traffic priority to transit vehicles, and maintaining economic development potential by accommodating commercial vehicles.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRATEGIC REGIONAL SYSTEMS

Regional Arterial Roads

The RTP recommends that shared-use principles be applied in maintaining/improving major arterial roads. For arterial improvements, expansions/extensions and bypasses, the RTP also recommends consolidated entrances or frontage roads, limited use of new traffic signals, transit accommodation, pedestrian and bicycle accommodation, and a balance between access to individual land uses and optimal traffic flow.

The RTP also supports introducing new arterial structures, such as river (or other natural feature) crossings to relieve congestion and improve access, rail/arterial grade separations to reduce conflicts and improve safety, arterial/arterial grade separations to improve traffic flow and safely accommodate pedestrian and bicycle travel, bicycle and pedestrian grade separations to improve pedestrian access and promote safety, and expressway/tollway interchanges to improve access and support economic development by allowing commercial goods to move more efficiently.

Regional Transit

The RTP recommends these strategic improvements to the region's transit system:

- Traffic signal priority systems for transit vehicles regionwide.
- Additional service on existing bus and rail routes, particularly off-peak and reverse commute.
- Additional transfer capacity and improved coordination at high-demand connection points.
- Additional park-and-ride facilities to encourage increased transit use.
- New bus and paratransit services for currently unserved areas.
- Bus routes with limited stops that run longer distances.
- Community circulators that allow an alternative to short auto trips.
- Short rail extensions and additional sidings to improve existing rail operating efficiency.
- Expanded regional network of local, feeder and express buses.

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian (Bike/Ped)

The RTP recommends strategic improvements to shared-use facilities that foster “routine accommodation” of pedestrian and bicycle design in all transportation projects and services. This includes improvements that support bike/ped access to transit and provide bike/ped travel information and promotion as part of larger management and operation strategies applied to the entire transportation system.

The first comprehensive regional bike/ped planning process, called *Soles and Spokes*, includes a regional inventory of county and local bike/ped plans and strategies. Once completed, the RTP anticipates that *Soles and Spokes* will provide additional guidance on routine bike/ped accommodation, shared use and dedicated facilities.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) . . .

is the design and development of land around public transit stations and bus stops that encourage people to use mass transportation. The purpose of TOD is to build active and convenient communities that link people to jobs as well as to commercial, retail and entertainment centers. The RTP stresses TOD as an overall plan objective, and as an important element in specific project recommendations.

Regional Freight

The RTP recommends these strategic improvements:

- Coordinate freight rail operations with commuter rail service and infrastructure projects.
- Reduce rail/highway grade crossing conflicts through grade separations and at-grade safety improvements.
- Mitigate negative community effects caused by train horns and blocked crossings.
- Establish highway system truck priorities during highway maintenance, reconstruction and expansion projects or to address freight congestion regionwide.
- Correct severe bottlenecks that impede freight mobility and cause inefficient routing.
- Provide continued improvement of “intermodal connector” facilities.
- Provide “freight-friendly” installations, such as truck-only electronic toll collection, pre-clearance and credentialling, information/advisory systems, and truck storage lanes that improve safety.

In addition, the RTP supports the comprehensive freight rail plan developed by the Association of American Railroads and supported by the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago. *(See major capital projects on side B.)*



MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

Legend: ● = Committed Category (already funded); * = System Category (quicker turnaround);
◆ = Project Category (more ready); ■ = Corridor Category (need study). (See page 3 for explanation of categories.)

Chicago Transit Hub

Circle Line – new strategic links to Chicago’s “L” system; ●Phase I, ◆Phase II, ■Phase III
West Loop Transportation Center – subway under Clinton Street between Eisenhower Expressway and Lake Street
Airport Express Rapid Transit – limited-stop service along CTA’s Blue and Orange Lines, providing direct service to O’Hare and Midway airports
Central Area Bus Rapid Transit System

Improvement to Existing Facilities

Rail Upgrades and Extensions – Rapid Transit

* **Green Line** – new stations
 ◆ **Orange Line** – extension past Midway Airport to vicinity of Ford City Shopping Center
 ■ **Yellow Line** – new stations and extension to vicinity of Old Orchard Shopping Center
 ■ **Blue Line** – extension to western suburbs
 ■ **Red Line** – extension to 130th Street and Bishop Ford Expressway

Rail Upgrades and Extensions – Commuter Rail

(Most projects include infrastructure and service upgrades.)

Rock Island – ■ proposed extension to Minooka; * track and yard upgrades
Southwest Service – * extension to Manhattan (already underway), with ■ possible future extension to Midewin
Metra Electric – ■ possible extension to proposed South Suburban Airport; * service upgrade
North Central Service – * infrastructure and service upgrades (already underway); ■ full service
 ■ **Heritage Corridor** – new stations
 ■ **Milwaukee District West** – extension to Huntley, Marengo and possibly Rockford; alternate extension to Hampshire also proposed

■ **Milwaukee District North** – extensions to Richmond and Wadsworth
 ■ **Union Pacific Northwest** – * extension to Johnsburg and possibly Richmond; * track and signal
 ■ **Burlington Northern Santa Fe** – extension to Oswego, and possibly Plano
 ■ **Union Pacific West** – ● extension to Elburn (already underway); * track and signal

Existing Major Highways

(Most projects include safety/traffic flow improvements and possible reconstruction.)

* **I-90 (Northwest Tollway)** – add lanes from I-294 to Elgin toll plaza, and possibly to Sandwald Road
 * **I-88 (East-West Tollway)** – add lanes from I-290 to Orchard Road in Kane County
 * **I-294/94 (Tri-State Tollway)** – add lanes from Balmoral Road to IL137, and possibly north to IL173; add lanes from US12/20 to IL394 and full interchange between I-294 and I-57
 * **IL394** – convert existing arterial to freeway design from I-90/94 to south of proposed IL394/I-57 connector road
 * **I-80/94** – add lanes from I-294 to the Indiana State line
 * **I-57** – add lanes from I-80 to proposed I-57/IL394 connector, continuing to Will County line
 * **I-80** – add lanes from US45 to I-55, continuing to Will County line
 * **I-55** – add lanes from Naperville Road to US6 in Will County, continuing to Arsenal Road
 * **Elgin-O’Hare Expressway** – add lanes from US20 to I-290
 ■ **I-290 High-Occupancy Vehicle Lanes** – from I-88 to Austin Avenue

Expanding System to Manage Growth and Change

Bus Rapid Transit

■ **Ogden Avenue Transitway**
 ◆ **Cermak Road BRT**
 ◆ **DuPage “J” Line BRT**

New Facilities Serving Major Employment Centers

■ **Southeast Commuter Rail Service** – serving Chicago, south Cook County, northeast Will County, with possible connects to proposed South Suburban Airport
 ◆ **Elgin-O’Hare and West O’Hare Bypass**
 ■ **Northwest Transit Corridor**

New Transportation Corridors – Rail

■ **Mid-City Transitway** – new rapid transit line serving west and south sides of Chicago
 ■ **Inner Circumferential** – new commuter rail line in western Cook County connecting Midway and O’Hare airports
 ■ **Outer Circumferential** – new commuter rail along EJ&E rail line serving Lake, Cook, DuPage and Will counties

New Transportation Corridors – Highway

■ **Richmond-Waukegan** – from US12 at Wisconsin border to IL53 near Wilson/Fairfield Road
 ■ **Central Lake County** – IL53 extension to I-94 and IL120/Wilson Road
 ◆ **North-Central Will County** – I-355 extension from I-55 south to I-80
 ■ **South Suburban** – I-355 extension from proposed I-80 terminus east to I-57
 ■ **I-57/IL394 Connector** – extension from I-57 proposed terminus east to IL394 in vicinity of proposed South Suburban Airport
 ■ **Illiana** – extension of proposed I-57/IL394 connector from proposed terminus at IL394 east to I-65 in Indiana
 ■ **Prairie Parkway** – new facility connecting I-80 to I-88 in Kane and Kendall Counties

NOTE: Expanded descriptions of major capital projects are available at the CATS web site, www.catsmpo.com.

CHICAGO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
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THE 2030REPORTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions, e-mail us at SP2030@catsmpo.com, visit the CATS web site at www.catsmpo.com and click on *Shared Path 2030* for more information, or call 312/793-3466.

ABOUT CATS

The Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) was formed in 1955 to develop the first comprehensive long-range transportation plan for northeastern Illinois. For more than 45 years, CATS has been responsible for planning and programming transportation improvements in this region. CATS is currently developing the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) through a process called Shared Path 2030.